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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 0407

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 1, 2002

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for November 30-December 1, 2002. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. OHAL ENDS IN DIYARBAKIR AND SIRNAK (Hurriyet/Radikal/Sabah/Turkiye/Bolge) The fifteen-year-old State of Emergency (OHAL) was lifted in Diyarbakir and Sirnak on November 30. Between 1,000 and 2,000 people, mostly youths, gathered to celebrate OHAL's abolition by dancing to the tunes of folk songs, burning sparklers and shouting slogans in support of peace, democracy, freedom and PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu paid a last visit to Diyarbakir prior to the abolition. Aksu said the administration returned to normal in the region and added studies continued to come up with new applications regarding the status of village guards. Evrensel reported that, regarding changes to take place in the region following the abolition of OHAL, Diyarbakir Bar Association President Sezgin Tanrikulu displayed a "Let's wait and see" attitude, noting that the Provincial Administration Law had changed all of Turkey into an OHAL. Cumhuriyet reported the Diyarbakir Democracy Platform formed by 46 NGO's, political parties, professional chambers and labor unions celebrated the lifting of OHAL in a meeting held at the Municipal Theater Hall by applauding and cheering. The paper indicated 33,070 people have lost their lives in the region since 1984.

3. HRA REPORT ON MISSING MUS MAN (Evrensel) A Human Rights Association (HRA) delegation issued a report following their investigation of the disappearance of Varto (Mus) resident Siddik Kaya after he had left home to meet with local Jandarma official Celal San. The report said there were efforts to present the incident as an ordinary judicial incident, but noted relations between Kaya and San were not judicial and simple relations. The report stressed there was serious evidence confirming Kaya's disappearance in custody. Kaya's father, Tekdemir Kaya, suspects San of having handed Kaya over to the Kartal family as the suspected murderer of Ahmet Kartal.

4. PKK SUSPECT RELEASED (Evrensel) Van State Security Court ordered the release of Sabahattin Ozmen, arrested in Istanbul in 1999 and then ordered to remain in custody for "membership in the PKK," based on information from (PKK) informants arrested in Tatvan (Bitlis) in 1993. The court is awaiting a medical report from the Forensic Medical Department saying if Ozmen is sane or not.

5. DEHAP OFFICIAL ACQUITTED (Evrensel) Hakkari Felony Court acquitted Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) Hakkari provincial chairman Musa Ciftci, charged with violation of Article 159/1 of the Turkish Criminal Code by "criticizing the court via press." The charges stemmed from Ciftci's holding a press conference to criticize the detention of People's Democracy Party (HADEP) Hakkari provincial chairman Sebahattin Suvagci in February 2002.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

16. ADANA DELEGATION LOBBYING FOR EU

(Milliyet) A Mediterranean Exporters Union (MEU) delegation, led by MEU President Tarik Bozbey, met with contacts in Brussels, where (EU) Bi-lateral Commercial Relations Director Lee Bail and OECD Director Joan Jean met the delegation. In Brussels, Bozbey and his delegation talked about the results of the (November 3) parliamentary elections held in Turkey and Turkey's EU bid.

17. A WHITE LIE SAVES MARDIN

(Sabah) Mardin Residents Education and Solidarity Foundation (MAREV) President Ibrahim Ozlen's "UNESCO will declare Mardin a world province after Venice and Jerusalem" statement in 2000 has had effects of a magic touch on the historic province, which had been neglected for years. This statement has been the salvation of Mardin, where the value of historic homes rose to USD 200,000 and the number of visitors jumped from several thousand to 150,000 people. Ozlen explains the reason for this lie: "We were not able to attract the attention of the press or anyone else no matter what we did. Everyone claimed ownership over and supported my lie. Even State officials believed it."

HOLTZ